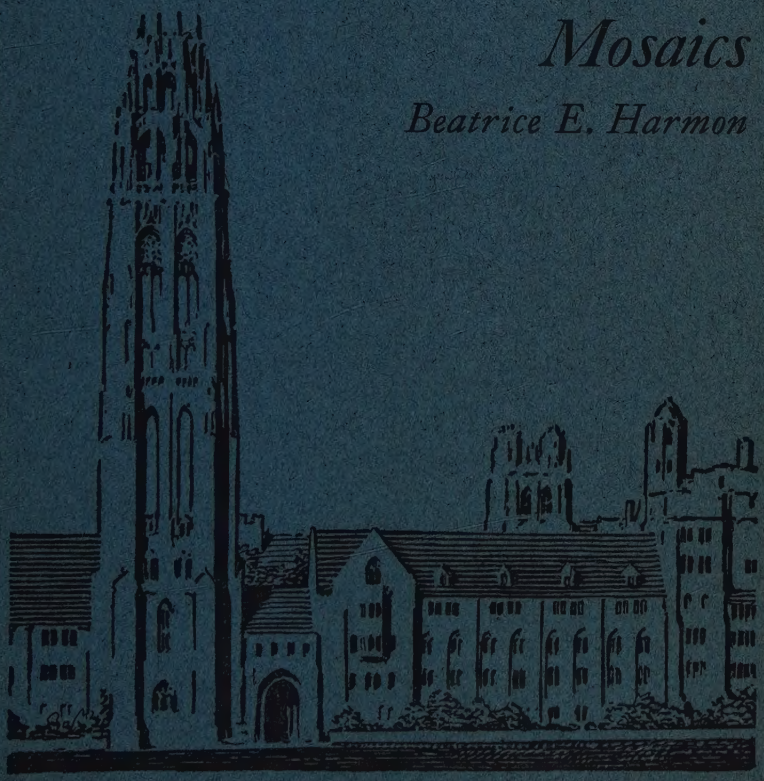
THE YALE SERIES

Mosaics

Beatrice E. Harmon



OF YOUNGER POETS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

THE *Yale Series of Younger Poets is designed to afford a publishing medium for the work of young men and women who have not yet secured a wide public recognition. It will include only such verse as seems to give the fairest promise for the future of American poetry,—to the development of which it is hoped that the Series may prove a stimulus. Communications concerning manuscripts should be addressed to the Editor of the Yale Series of Younger Poets, in care of the Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut.*

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Mosaics

BEATRICE E. HARMON

"I count life just a stuff
To try the soul's strength on."

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DEDICATED
IN REVERENT MEMORY
TO MY MOTHER

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APOLOGIA.

If I give Him my song will He judge of its strain,
Will He balance its rhythms and seek for its flaws?
Will He hear in its measures the beat of my pain,
Will He see in its passion the proof of His laws?

If I pluck from the naked, tense strings of my soul
One faltering chord from the infinite song,
Will He make the sad dissonance perfect and whole,
And welcome the motive whose music is wrong?

If I sing Him my best will He praise it or damn?
Will He scan it for error as all critics should?
Will He pardon the song if I sing as I am,
And father-wise love it and reckon it good?

If I give Him my heart with the song that I raise,
Will He see where the song-wound gapes crimson and wide?
Will He give me the meed of His patience and praise,
Will He listen and love me and know that I tried?

PAIN-SONG.

THERE be three things a heart may do
When it is big with pain
(For hearts put forth their bitterness
Like new leaves in the rain,
And hearts that once bear bitter fruit
Are quick to bear again).

There be three things a heart may do
When it is like to break,
To show its wells of wretchedness,
Or hide its grievous ache;
There be three things a heart may do,
And each his choice may take.

There be three things a heart may do
When it is suffering;
It may put forth its pain in tears,
Or hate (a fearful thing!)—
I gave my bitter heart the lute,
And taught my heart to sing.

THOUGH I MUST WALK IN SORROW.

THOUGH I my golden wings must fold away,
I shall not shun the sweetness of the day,
And if the splendor of my dreams be done,
Still have I left the gracious, glowing sun.

Though sorrow's shadow darken this, my heart,
And I be set from human joys apart,
While dawn doth streak the sullen eastern sky,
More gladly than the lark sings, so shall I!

Though I must walk in sorrow I shall sing,
Be life forevermore a hateful thing,
And when at last mine eyes look into death,
A song shall rise with my last rising breath!

SONG.

WIND of the world
  Sighing to die,
Weary thou art,
  But wearier, I.

Sun of the sky
  Faintishly gold,
Thou and my heart,
  Old! Old! Old!

Light of the stars
  Over the sea,
Ancient and pale,
  Might candle-light be.

Ages to me
  Have come and gone,
Yet leads the trail
  On! On! On!

WHEN I GO BACK TO READING-TOWN.

WHEN I go back to Reading-town,
Will Reading-town be fair?
When I go back to Reading-town,
Will Reading's hills be leathern-brown,
And Reading's tree-tops bare?

O I remember Reading-town,
A hamlet by the sea.
I lived and loved in Reading-town,
And laid my young heart bleeding down,
My young heart bold and free.

O Reading's sky was blue and bright,
And Reading's hills were green;
The mavis sang the livelong night,
My soul fell swooning with delight
In Reading-town yestreen.

When I sojourned in Reading-town,
That seaside hamlet far
Beyond the mountains grim and brown,
A blind musician sat him down
And strummed an old guitar.

The flowers bloomed in sweet array
In Reading-town in spring,
And Reading's gardens they were gay,
The finch a charming roundelay
The livelong day did sing.

O I remember Reading-town,
It was the world to me!
I lived and died in Reading-town,
Was born again in Reading-town,
In Reading by the sea.

CHANSON DÉLICE.

Old wines for those who will—
Sauterne and Burgundy,
Clos from a golden hill,
Rare, red, sweet Lipari.
Old wines for those who will—
But old books for me!

Honors for those who must,
Glory for those who dare.
For me a book with dust,
And a deep fireside chair.
Honors for those who must—
For me, old books and rare!

Riches for those who can
Fortune's caprices brook—
But I care for mint nor man
In a warm inglenook.
Riches for those who can—
For me, an ancient book!

Love for the fortunate,
Fame for a chosen few.
For me a wide Georgian grate
With neither bay nor rue.
Love for the fortunate—
For me, old books and true!

Old wines for those who will—
Sauterne and Burgundy,
Clos from a golden hill,
Rare, red, sweet Lipari.
Old wines for those who will—
But old books for me!

WANDERLUST.

O I hear the great world calling
To the peace-tired heart of me;
I can hear white waters falling,
Over rock and white cliff falling,
Pleading, luring me to follow,
And it's all a part of me.

Overhead the wild geese winging
Their uncharted flights afar
Set my wild, free heart a-singing,
And the gladsome skies a-ringing;
Never love nor care shall stay me
With my eyes upon a star.

In the silent desert places
I have waited, listened, prayed,
I have gazed upon the faces
Of the men of all the races,
I have lingered in the gardens
Where the old Earth's first-born played.

On high mountains, lone, undaunted,
Like a king upon a throne,
I have listened to the haunted
Melodies of sad winds chaunted
Like a dismal wail of many
Lonely spirits making moan.

O the beauties, deep, eternal,
Flaming sunset, tender dawn,
Landscapes lovely, fresh and vernal,
Height and farness vast, supernal,
All the old world's charms enchant me,
Tempt me, taunt me, draw me on.

In my soul a madness burning,
  In my heart ecstatic pain,
As I follow yearning, yearning
For the goal at every turning,
But the sorcery is on me,
  And the quest is futile, vain.

O I hear the great world calling
  To the peace-tired heart of me;
I can hear white waters falling,
Over rock and white cliff falling,
Pleading, luring me to follow,
  And it breaks the heart of me.

PERSPECTIVE.

A LONELY tree upon the leathern hill,
A village where the long-departed sleep,
A reach of noble forest, solemn, still,
A crumbling marble shaft where lichens creep.

Autumnal skies above serenely blue,
Criss-crossed with veering songsters southward turned,
Vast leagues of pasture-land whose vernal hue
The blazing sun of August russet burned.

The sky, the hill, the slow-departing sun,
A village calm and placid in its sleep,
A few faint stars that rise when day is done,
A lonely soul that stops to pray and weep.

TO MY FRIEND.

GUIDE of my childhood and stay of my youth,
Critic and counsellor gentle and true,
When I reflect I am frightened forsooth—
What would have come of me, Friend, but for you?

Ready to hearten me after defeat,
Tireless and tender whatever my woe,
Making my triumph more perfectly sweet,
Quick to applaud me, to chasten me slow,

Friendliest counsellor, critic and guide,
Stay of my spirit unselfish and true,
Faithful and patient whatever betide—
Friend, I am thankful that God gave me you!

RED SLIPPERS.

SMALL red slippers, you were mine
At the magic age of nine.

Dainty yet, though sadly worn,
Faded somewhat, scratched and torn.

Life has used us very ill,
Small red slippers, dainty still.

You are worn and I am sad—
Both have lost the bloom we had.

Looking at you I descry
Dancing lightly, gaily by

With her bright hair in a whirl,
Someone's merry little girl,

Eyes and cheeks with mirth aflame,
Spirit shining free of shame

From her golden, tousled head,
To her slippers small and red.

Of those slippers vain is she,
Bending proudly down to see

Pretty pointed beaded toes,
Tiny crimson satin bows.

Little girl with dancing feet,
Stainless, lovely, pure and sweet,

Little laughing, dancing girl,
With your bright hair in a whirl,

How I vainly long to be
Your companion gay and free!

Small red slippers, dainty still,
You awake the long lost thrill

Of the day you first were mine,
At the magic age of nine.

THE WOMAN TO THE MAN.

The dream
Is done,
And love at last departed.
Poor dream!
But one
At least, is broken-hearted!

Who'll pay
The price
Of love denied, defrauded?
You'll say,
"Suffice
That love himself applauded!"

Manlike
You smile
And shrug to speed the going;
You strike
The while
I strive and weep, not knowing.

You take,
I give,
As 'twas and ever shall be!
I break,
You live
And jest while fears appall me.

Why ask
Who'll pay?
Of us two I'm the debtor.
My task
Today—
Tomorrow I'll know better!

DESPAIR.

(*A Study in Vers Libre.*)

I AM the weariest mortal God's sad eyes look down upon.
Madness sits like a grinning spectre beside me.
My torn and naked soul shudders under the torturer's knife.
I have traversed every vain inch of sorrow's fearful labyrinth.
I have laid down the hopes of my life
Like frail flowers on the grave of one I love.
I have said an eternal farewell to laughter.
I have sent the pale ghost of joy from me forever.

Out of my heart have gone the truths of my childhood.
Faith has fallen like a wearied hero
Whom the terrors of battle have conquered.
Nevermore shall happiness lift my crushed spirits,
Nevermore pleasure woo my heart away from its grief.
Like the willow burthened with the weight of its own boughs,
My soul droops under the heaviness of its afflictions.

Loneliness wraps me round like a sable mantle.
Desolation is my bed-fellow.
Sadness clutches me with the relentless tentacles
Of the deadly octopus.
I faint into blessed darkness.
O God! O God! Is this life? Where is Thy hand?
I grope, I search,
I stretch out my shaking fingers in the night to find Thee.
I find only black space.

TO ONE WHO SLEEPS AT OSWEGO.

(*Written on the Fourteenth Anniversary of Her Death, June* 27, 1918.)

How many sombre years now lie between
My pain-scarred heart and thee who gave it life!
How many times has summer's changing green
Renewed thy simple couch, and winter's strife
Made havoc with the eglantine that blows
From June unto November's early snows.

How many times since that far-distant day,
When I, all helpless, saw thee sink and die,
Have I seen youth's bright visions borne away
On black-winged clouds that covered up my sky,
And hid the sun of faith that trembled there,
And burdened my young spirit with gray care.

How often in my waking dreams of thee,
Have I thy vanished spirit mixed with mine
In full communion, rich and deep and free,
Of heaven-sweetness, tender, pure, divine;
But O how I have sought thee in the night,
And, hopeless, cried to God to give me sight!

Through all the bleak, sad years that lie between
My pain-scarred heart and thee who gave it life,
One hope has kept my spirit fresh and green,
And held me firm whate'er the season's strife;
And all my darkest hours will sweetly shine,
If God restore my spirit unto thine!

QUESTION.

BECAUSE the right forbid it, shall I cease to love thee then?
Because to love thee as I could were to invite despair?
Can man direct the seasons, does it fall to mortal ken
To rule the elements of earth, the wind, the sun, the air?

Because the right forbid me, must I count my honor less,
Ignore my need, brook one old law that rates such loving crime?
Must I, for that opinion dooms my love as sinfulness,
Destroy the beauty that has made my barren life sublime?

Because the fates decreed it that our times should be awry,
Because I entered life too late and you came in too soon,
Must all the glory of my love be idly left to die,
And I deny my cheated heart thy great love's perfect boon?

ANSWER.

THOUGH I must bar the vision out of all that must not be,
Though I a deafened ear must turn to love's importuning,
My heart shall be a garden that shall bloom with thoughts of thee,
And pain shall make my barren life a lovely, fruitful thing!

WHEN THE SPRING COMES.

WHEN spring comes over the hills, my love,
When spring comes over the hills,
And the sun comes down in the daffodils,
And the wild lark's music throbs and thrills,
And the night stars fade in the great above—
When spring comes over the hills, my love,
O then will my sorrow cease to be,
And then will my joy come back to me.

When spring comes over the hills, my love,
And lays on the earth her kiss,
And the wild rose wakes to the morning's bliss,
O then will I cease to think of this,
But leave me my pain till the spring, my love,
When the light comes back to the great above,
And give me my grief till my heart forget—
I'll laugh with the spring, but not—not yet!

RESTORATION.

DEAR God, how this sweet western wind inspires
To dreams long lost since childhood's fearless reign;
How spring airs fan gray embers into fires,
And free the old, tired spirit of its pain.

Cast off thy shroud of grieving, O my soul,
The chill, death-smelling garments of the tomb;
Like restless steeds on high the March clouds roll,
And all the dark earth's bursting into bloom.

SPRING-SONG.

SPRING came out of the dawn today
In loveliness and grace,
And sang an April roundelay
With sunbeams in her face.
The crocus smiled where snowdrifts lay
Tender, sweet, and as white as they,
Like a girl in bridal lace.

Spring came out of the morning mist
With dewdrops in her hair
And a madrigal, to keep her tryst
With the gray world in his lair.
The lute-reeds echoed as they kissed,
The wind, that merry celloist,
Played loud a nuptial air.

Blossoms sprang on the mountainside
Like stars on the walls of night;
Earth sang in rapture, skies replied,
Seas did their joy indite.
The gray world laughed in hoary pride
And opened his coffers to his bride,
Her beauties to bedight.

DEFIANCE.

O NOT in grief I put my joy away,
Nor grieving see my last dream's sweetness fade;
Not my part now to kneel and meekly pray
That rugged fate will spare my heart this blow,
And save from this new pain my soul betrayed
So oft by futile hope and humbled low.

O not in grief I see my joy depart,
No moaning from my lips shall mark its end;
Let fall the lash of fate across my heart,
Let come what will of changing and of chance,
Let pain my pliant spirit bruise and bend
Across the anvil stone of circumstance.

O not in grief I let the vision go
That to my heart so long was vainly pressed;
Let jesting gods their unsought gifts bestow,
Let loss and cold misfortune bear me down,
I will not grieve for what I once possessed,
Or weep or rail at fate's unyielding frown.

O not in grief the truth do I confront
That life is change and change is seeming loss;
In sombre pride I rise to bear the brunt;
In pride I meet disaster, for I know
The secret solace in the heavy cross;
O not in grief I let my last dream go!

SEPTEMBER.

The maples quicken day by day,
The sumac reddens on the knoll,
And goldenrod strews thick the way
With brilliant, lacy fol-de-rol.

The dawns approach each twilight hour
In hesitance, reluctant, slow;
As though compelled by hidden power
To keep their tryst, they sadly go.

Earth's solemn hour of death is near;
In gracious calm her lovely feet,
Unstayed by dread or fainting fear,
Go forth the champion to meet.

In quiet days the year expires,
By Time held merciless and fast,
But Beauty, rising from the fires,
Walks on triumphant to the last.

CANTICLE.

No trembling fear of Death have I.
Old Sorrow taught me how to die,

And gave to Death's gray covered face
A strange, divinely winning grace.

No fear of Death possesses me,
Though it be end or life to be.

Old Sorrow hath my spirit bared;
I stand erect and well prepared—

My pleading lips earth-loving, dumb—
To meet the gray guest when he come.

I pluck my joys like red flowers up,
And crowd them in my heart's deep cup,

Nor let one drop of sweetness go
Though all my being overflow.

I drink life's scarlet-running wine
Today, lest it be no more mine.

When in the night Death comes for me
A filled-up chalice I shall be,

A draught of life's own ruddy breath,
A savory offering to Death!

I feel no terror of the night,
Though it go on or break in light;

If I no other haven find
Than earth's broad bosom, warm and kind,

Yet will I evermore be blest
With life's inviolate bequest.

My low abode will lovely be
If I my heart may take with me.

No fear of dying have I now,
Since wise old Sorrow taught me how!

THE ROAD TO OLD TOWN.

O SUNNY road to Old Town,
Where childhood's treasures be,
O quiet hills of Old Town,
My heart hath need of thee,
To stay its wild endeavor,
To still its pain forever,
To heal my spirit, Old Town,
And minister to me.

O very sweet is Old Town
When all its ways are green;
A sweeter place than Old Town
I never yet have seen.
The veery's anthem tender
At daybreak I remember,
For I was young in Old Town,
And life was yet serene.

Had I but known that Old Town
Was even half so fair,
My heart that dreamed in Old Town
Would still be dreaming there.
And I had missed the grieving
Of false love's sad deceiving,
Had told my days in Old Town,
And never wed with care.

O blessed peace of Old Town,
I cherish thee today!
Since I went out from Old Town
I have had need to pray.
The world hath bruised my spirit,
Hath taught my heart to fear it:
I will go back to Old Town,
And dream my pain away.

O I will be in Old Town
  When April's at the door;
I will go back to Old Town
  And never leave it more.
When spring her blush is showing,
And cherry blooms are snowing
Upon the hills of Old Town,
  I'll con my lessons o'er.

O sunny road to Old Town,
  Where childish virtues be,
O lovely, quiet Old Town,
  My heart hath need of thee;
Thy hills shall teach forgetting,
Thy stillness shame my fretting,
And all thy sweetness, Old Town,
  Shall minister to me!

SONNET.

I came in sorrow to a sunny hill
To keep with Pain a tryst as old as man,
With murmurous tongue and faltering heart that still
To fairer scenes and vanished blisses ran
In futile grief for youth's sad, squandered days,
And old delights and loves ill-starred and vain;
Down dim, forgotten paths and devious ways
I came to keep my rendezvous with Pain.
I came rebelling to my fated tryst
As Grecian maid in hate and beauty came
To her barbaric master and was kissed,
And loving found forgetfulness of shame.
I came to Pain with loathing and despair
And found in him a master wise and fair.

AT OLD HOUSE, MONOQUET.

Ye hills and fields of childish memory,
Ye pleasant paths and prospects that I knew
When life's clean page lay open for the world
To write its woes and wonderments upon,
Ye meadows that lie placid still and dream
Beneath wild hyacinth and iris blue
As heaven; ye cherished scenes of old,
Familiar-strange, I come
As children come, to supplicate
From thy maternal bosom sympathy;
I come a penitent in search of peace,
Too wearied of the world to love it more,
Too fearful of sad self to trust it more,
My life's white page all blurred and blotted o'er
With strange, illegible inscriptions, and

Mysterious, wild characters; I come,
Ye scenes of pure and perfect memory,
And bring thee chastened tears to water thee,
That in thy freshened aspect I may trace
The meaning of my life's confused design.
O hills and woods and fields, ye are unchanged;
I am an alien, come
To seek a charm I left with my lost childhood here,
These many long years since.
Tranquil, serene and calm, ye are the same;
I am a stranger, restless and unknown,
Amid the scenes that knew my childish face.

VICTORY.

SWEET is the triumph over pain
And woman-need;
To feel the soul ride sure again
Is sweet indeed.

To conquer woman's old desire
Is very good;
With chill resolve I quench the fire
As courage should.

No woman hurt shall e'er forefend
The fruits of art;
But there's a new-made grave to tend
Within my heart!

SEPARATION.

SOMETIME upon some crowded city street,
After these laggard years, we two shall stand
Silent, in awed confusion fixed and sweet,
Till hearts arouse, and eye and tongue and hand;
There will be stillness pregnant and profound,
An island in a Babel-sea of sound.

Sometime from bitter dreams I shall awake
And joyous greet thee, smile for very smile;
My heart will sing that only seemed to break;
I did but lose thee for a little while—
I did but lose thee for a day, a year;
Sometime I shall look up and find thee here.

KISMET.

I know there's jest for singing-folk
On busy thoroughfares;
The laughing street must have its joke,
And chuckle as it stares
At all who stand in beggar's cloak
And hawk unwanted wares.

I know there's grief for all who dream,
And pain for all who sing;
The golden coin of youth must stream
To sate this Moloch-thing;
Who feeds the world his soul, I deem,
Must die a-hungering.

There's scorn for idle singing-folk,
And tears for them, I trow,
But I will don my beggar's cloak,
And pay my youth and go;
And if my foolish heart be broke,
The world will never know!

OCTOBER.

I crossed a little crooked bridge
That leads by meadows sere;
A robin in a privet hedge
Complained the dying year;
The flowers on the water's edge
Dropped each a pale blue tear.

I sat down on the riverside
To watch the maple trees;
Their banners floating far and wide
With every vagrant breeze
Made crimson cloud and crimson tide
And little crimson seas.

I saw a solitary bird
Among the branches bare,
And thought I never yet had heard
So sadly sweet an air.
I took a thought, a wish, a word,
And made a little prayer.

CAPRICE.

I'd live my life from day to day
With a heart as free as gypsies are
Of futile hope and discontent,
And memory's unrelievèd scar;
I'd sing my dawn-song on the plain
And sleep beneath some mountain-star

With never a wish to sing again
My dawn-song on the mountain heights,
And never a tear for vanished things,
And never a thought for old delights;
I'd leave my cares as gypsies do,
Dead with the fires of old camp-sites.

I'd live my life as gypsies live,
And build my fires by a million streams;
I'd count each day as a song that's sung,
And break my camp with the sun's first beams;
I'd follow the road as gypsies do,
In a piebald caravan of dreams.

THE HILLS OF JESSAMINE.

GREEN are the hills of Jessamine,
Green are the fields below;
The clouds on the hills of Jessamine
Are white as maiden snow;
But sad is my heart in Jessamine,
Where I dwelt so long ago.

Fair are the ways of Jessamine,
Good are my hours, forsooth;
But half of my joy in Jessamine
Is dead of a bitter truth;
It was not so in Jessamine
When I dwelt here in my youth.

Green are the hills of Jessamine,
Green are the fields below,
And beauty dwells in Jessamine
Where it dwelt so long ago;
But there's pain in ancient Jessamine—
It was not always so!

I dwell in lovely Jessamine,
By mountain brooks and meres;
But there's a thing in Jessamine
My spirit feels and fears.
It was not so in Jessamine,
In dear and bygone years.

It was not so in Jessamine,
When life was in its green;
I came to seek in Jessamine
An old hope sweet and keen;
But all the peace of Jessamine
Gives not the years between.

Green are the hills of Jessamine,
  Green are the fields below;
But I am sad in Jessamine
  The lovely, for I know
From the fair hills of Jessamine
  I must forever go.

THE VENDOR OF DREAMS.

THE vendor of dreams with his fanciful pack,
And a smile that was wistful and gay,
With his tinkling bells and a pack on his back,
Appeared in the city one day.
The vendor of dreams with his flute and his bells,
And his fabulous charms and mystical spells,
And strange incantations and exquisite smells,
To the market-place turned him straightway.

The vendor of dreams with a song in his heart
Came down from his mountainous height,
With a store of his wealth that he sought to impart,
Ere the day purpled deep into night;
And he sat him down plain where the people all go
Heedlessly hurrying, heedlessly slow;
"They'll buy!" quoth the vendor—for how could he know?—
As he emptied his pack in their sight.

The vendor of dreams spread his store to their gaze
On the cobblestoned, commonplace street;
From his fanciful pack in a roseate blaze,
He poured out his dreams at their feet.
There were rubies of fancy and visions as old
As Ethiop's topaz and Ophir's fine gold,
And tales that were hoar when the fables were told,
And stories enchantingly sweet.

The vendor of dreams laid his glorious store
On the stones of the gray market place,
But the hurrying crowds billowed on as before
In their blindly unheeding mad race.
The vendor of dreams tapped his quaint little bells,
And breathed on his flute those mysterious spells,
And shook from their silks the exotic, sweet smells,
With a wistful, gay smile on his face.

"They will buy!" quoth the vendor, and polished his ware
Till it burned with a marvellous glow;
And he carved at his jewels with tenderest care,
For how could the poor vendor know?
There were many who smiled in the market that day
At the fanciful pack and the flute's roundelay,
But never one stopped as he went on his way
At the dream vendor's wonderful show.

The twilight came down on the cobblestoned street,
And the city's brown, hurrying streams;
With lips that were wistful and eyes that were sweet,
Sat the poor, foolish vendor of dreams,
With his gay, silent flute and quaint little bells,
And his charms and spices and delicate smells.
"They don't understand!" quoth the weaver of spells,
Quoth the poor, weary vendor of dreams.

SONNETS WRITTEN IN THE SPRING.

I HEARD a bluebird yesterday at dawn
Singing his sweet evangel of the spring;
Today the crocus blooms where dead leaves cling,
From garden beds the frosty mould has gone,
And winter's icy fangs from earth are drawn;
In woodland naves the priestly hermits sing
Their vesper praise in rapturous wondering,
And tender music thrills where late the wan,
Sad winter sun rested disconsolate
On lifeless tree and shrub and flowery vine;
The forest life once more articulate,
Prays with a myriad tongues at nature's shrine;
The pregnant earth is quickened and elate,
And every heart its joyance chants but mine.

* * * * *

For me the year speaks vainly in the spring;
I have no part in nature's festal play.
My year is always autumn since that day
I knew my love was but a wasted thing,
A shadow that thy greatness did but fling
Across my heart to darken it alway,
As ancient gods in sport did sometimes lay
On men the curse of hopeless hungering.
Like some dark place where lilies once did grow,
And slumbrous poppies smiled in every hue,
With asphodels in mounds of scented snow,
Where plashy pools of water purple-blue
Gave back to one high star its radiant glow,
My heart gives its one image back to you.

* * * * *

I feel life's ancient sorrow stir and strain
When spring comes with the sun across the hills;
The fragrant blood of old, dead races fills
My pulses still and challenges in vain;
The tides of my desire wax full and wane,
And I but grieve as disappointment wills;
Today thy heart with newfound gladness thrills;
To me fall but the loneliness and pain
And beauty of a glorious want denied.
I drink mine own heart's blood like bitter wine
That leaves my thirst hot and unsatisfied;
I gnaw the crusts of hopes that were divine,
And hunger pleads unfed and weary-eyed.
Ah, spring brings joy to every heart but mine!

* * * * *

I love not less that thou didst never know;
Comfort there is in thinking it had been
Hadst thou known, yes, or hadst thou truly seen
Into my heart that hungered for thee so.
Love's pace across the threshold was too slow;
Ere he had entered fate did intervene,
And hope died while its bud was in the green,
Leaving my heart a prey to endless woe.
Silence hath sealed the dead past's sepulture;
Time hath erased me as a pencilled jot
From thy heart's page, left clean and virgin-pure
Of passion's ineradicable blot;
Thine own forgetfulness Time did insure,
But my heart needing solace Time forgot.

* * * * *

At dawn today I heard the robins pipe
Their shrill, sweet matins to the quickened year;
I heard Pandean voices high and clear
Proclaim the earth's puerperal moment ripe;
In marshy fen the catbird and the snipe
Make boisterous merriment, the teal in fear
Hides in his nest of rushes crisp and sere,
The jay shrieks at his mirrored prototype;
Like lovely, naked girls the birches stand,
Their silvery limbs, bathed by the morning rain,
Warmed by the gentle sun's own reverent hand,
Tremble in ecstasies of procreant pain;
The gleeful Houris dance their saraband,
But to my heart spring comes, alas, in vain.

* * * * *

I dream in golden paths where beauty looks
Childlike and shy from every vernal place,
A frightened Arethuse of morning grace,
Fleeing the ardent deity of brooks;
In the gray city of mine aged books
Idly I dream, and in my fancy trace
The unforgotten image of thy face.
In all the earth's dark, crannied caves and nooks
Spring heaps her riches as a miser's gold,
Flings down her lavish wealth of scent and form,
And color multiplied a thousand-fold;
Outdoors the April world smiles sweet and warm,
But in my heart is winter's mordant cold,
The weary hush that follows night and storm.

* * * * *

What joys were mine hadst thou but understood;
Hadst thou but penetrated my disguise
Put on to hide my ardor, woman-wise,
Lest my heart tell its secret ere it should;
Had I but welcomed love while yet I could,
My life had been with thee a paradise.
Too long did I dissemble in thine eyes;
Thou couldst not see my rebel womanhood
That leaped at thy voice and in weariness
Of austere logic's cold, unfeeling way,
Did throw its student's foolscap down to bless
And praise thee, my Beloved, and the day
That gave thee to me chill and passionless,
And changed to rose my life's autumnal gray.

* * * * *

And thou didst give me friendship though I sought
Life's answer to my nature's virile need;
My thirst thou didst but sharpen with thy meed
Of kindly interest and tender thought;
My heart unschooled in passion and untaught
In love's deep subtleties, knew but one creed—
To love thee simply, solely, without heed;
And blindly thus mine own despair I wrought.
Why did I love thee, O my Star, my Friend,
Since joy be thy sweet portion, sorrow mine?
For me love's strange palimpsest hath no end:
I trace the ancient legend clear and fine
Where past and present in confusion blend,
And question love's immutable design.

* * * * *

Why dropped my heart unwanted from its bough?
Why yearned my spirit heavenward in vain?
Why bloomed this passion whose one fruit is pain?
O futile questions that do vex me now!
Let him who taught me love instruct me how
To live in peace who may not hope again—
Through my despair to see truth's prism plain,
And know love selfless and to love enow.
Life smote me as a dumb and waiting lyre,
And from my heart, Beloved, there did stream
A glory that transcends my vain desire,
A beauty perfect as life once did seem,
To fan the embers of my spirit's fire,
Burned low since I am widowed of my dream.

* * * * *

TO ———.

WHEN I to thee a tribute sought to pay,
No fitting word did human speech disclose;
My heart conceived what never tongue could say,
Nor silvery eloquence of mind compose;
I had else heaped a mound of gleaming praise,
Piled high rich words in lofty monument,
And crowned my marble with the poet's bays,
Still feeling my applause incompetent.
There may be gold unmined I could employ,
And virgin gems, pearl and chalcedony,
And rare red jacinth pure above alloy
To strike some fit medallion to thee:
But human speech my homage doth transcend,
High Priest of beauty, Poet, Greek, and Friend!

MELANCHOLY.

O UNPITYING melancholy, thou
Dark bird of evil mien and ebon wings
That throws eternal shade upon my brow,
And brings to mind sad, half-forgotten things—
Gaunt melancholy, spectre thou or bird,
Portentous ever of approaching woe,
What sacred secret have I witless stirred,
That thou dost haunt my hapless fortunes so?
Unkind companion, close, inseparate,
Faithful as never friend could faithful be,
What Nemesis art thou of hidden fate,
That thou dost like my shadow follow me?
Dark melancholy, bird of omen ill,
Sphinx-like, omniscient, pitiless and still!

SONNET.

I WANT no pity for my life forlorn,
Though love did go and leave me desolate;
I make no love-mad pleas importunate,
The tears of vain self-sickness I do scorn;
Yea, sad am I and sorrowful and shorn
Of my heart's prize; yet good is my estate,
Beloved, proud my spirit and elate;
For I have bled beneath life's cruelest thorn,
Known that which makes my soul forever free,
Forever dauntless of life's varied woe,
Ungyved and fearless, love, of misery,
Contemptuous of fate's extremest blow;
Beloved, since my heart hath yielded thee,
What further hell of anguish could I know?

RUPERT BROOKE.

I THINK the gods were envious of thee,
Thou spirit brother of Endymion;
In jealous wrath they did conspire with one
Who waited in the blue Ægean sea,
And stilled thy golden chorals wantonly,
And wanton laid his ancient curse upon
Thy lyric tongue, one orient April dawn
While Grecian winds intoned a threnody.
Then all the world above thy corpse did yearn;
Repentant death wore purple in thy name,
And Heaven for thee did seem the more divine;
No common clay shall cradle dust like thine—
Fair island Skyros of eternal fame
Shall be forever thy bright burial urn.

LOVE-SONG.

It was fated, love, to be
Ere life touched my spirit's scroll,
Etched its finis, dear, with thee,
Set thy seal upon my soul.
It was fated, love, to be—
That the sky-lark tells to me,
As he sweeps the heaven's bowl,
Drops his wild notes and is free—
It was fated so to be.

It was fated, love, to be
Ecstasy and mad despair,
Fleeting paradise to see
Canaan-wise in valleys fair;
It was fated so to be,
Ere life's torch burned high in me,
Love to follow and forswear.
That the wild lark tells to me—
It was fated so to be!

It was better so to be.
How had I life's wisdom known,
Had my honied lotus-tree
Not a thorn of anguish grown?
It was better so to be,
Yon glad sky-lark tells to me,
In his wild sweet notes down-thrown;
I am wiser, love, for thee—
It was better so to be!

ORISON.

To dream of April when December's snows
Lie heavy on the hills, and winter's bleak,
Gray, saddened skies no hope of April speak,
And feel the promise of last summer's rose;
To trust the heart whate'er the reason knows,
To love most faithfully when faith is weak,
To trace old beauty in life's withered cheek,
And find the virtue that from error grows;
To sorrow patiently and not despair,
To know defeat and fortune's rude rebuff,
To love and lose and yet find living fair,
To see the true in life's crude human stuff—
For more than this I neither ask nor care.
It is enough, O God! It is enough!

RONDEAU.

A BLUEBIRD sings high in the white aspen tree,
His "merry-sweet! merry-sweet! merry!" to spring;
The mavis sings soft and the robin sings free,
And the bells of the bright heavens silverly ring.
The gray hawk swings low,
And the brown warbler cries,
And the ebony crow
Flashes down thwart the skies.
While the bluebird sings clear on his white aspen bough,
His "merry-sweet! merry-sweet! merry!" to spring,
I'll dig me a grave for my sorrow, I vow,
And I'll buy me a staff, and a rondeau I'll sing,
With a "merry-sweet! merry-sweet! merry!" to spring.

CANZONET.

It is a sweet day—bluebirds cry
Their dulcet orisons on high,
And robins flood with lyric song,
With praise notes passionate and long,
The golden choir-loft of the sky.

It is a sweet day—passing sweet,
A fair new carpet for the feet,
A carpet wrought of tender green,
A fairy's handiwork, I ween,
Of woven charm and rich conceit.

It is a sweet day—underneath
A mossy cup-oak's bridal wreath,
A wood thrush thrills the joy of life,
And takes his meek brown love to wife,
While hermit priests their plainsongs breathe.

It is a sweet day—warm and kind;
A pure white blossom lies enshrined
In velvet moss, and violets show
Their fragile loveliness below
The leaves that loved an autumn wind.

It is a sweet day, Heart, and yet
Brims thy deep chalice with regret;
On every bud and flower and leaf
Feeds the black butterfly of grief;
It is a sweet day—Heart, forget!

EPITAPH.

SPRING, come early here, I pray,
With thy gifts of fresh'ning green,
Bring the myrtle and the bay,
And the rose-moss bright and clean.

Summer, let thy kiss be kind,
Touch not here with storm and heat,
Let thy soft, tear-laden wind
Sing her dirges sad and sweet.

Autumn, thou the tenderest,
Gracious mother of all grief,
On this loved hill's guarded crest
Drop thy sere and yellowed leaf.

Still, benignant Winter, know
That this little mound is dear,
Spread thy chaste and cleansing snow
Carefully—a child sleeps here.

SONG TO PIERROT.

O SING me songs of Samarcand,
Of Araby and Ind,
And we shall wander hand in hand
Adown some Eastern wind.
And you shall play, my Pierrot gay,
And I, thy sad Pierrette,
Will dance old Sorrow's charms away,
And ancient dole forget.

O bring me sweets, my gay Pierrot,
Musk-wood and rose ottar
From many a bearded fakir's show
In tent and street bazaar.
And bring me gems from old Bagdad,
Opal and lazuli,
And orient silks from Astrabad,
And peace from Arcady.

O bring me loves from storied time,
And I shall weave for you,
In fragrant garlands of sweet rhyme,
Love's loveliness anew.
And I shall fashion wreaths of song
Out of the futile years,
And chorals of remembered wrong,
And lyrics of old tears.

O sing me songs of Samarcand,
Of Araby and Ind,
And we shall wander hand in hand
Adown some Eastern wind.
And you shall play, my Pierrot gay,
And I, thy sad Pierrette,
Will dance old Sorrow's charms away,
And ancient dole forget.

REQUIEM.

THIS morning when the chariot of the sun
Climbed heaven's hills where sprang the radiant day,
And all the joy of earth sang out in one
Triumphant golden throstle's virelay,
From dreams of strange unrest I did arise
To find my little world an alien place;
Amid old scenes my eager, searching eyes
Now look in vain for thy familiar face.
And yet, O Friend, I cannot call thee dead,
My heart in human anguish doth refuse
The fearful thought; I shall be comforted
With thinking on thy love as I did use.
And if it be that love be without end,
Then still thou livest, O my Friend, my Friend!

JULIDA

(1901-1922)

SWEET, thou wert fashioned of star-dust and dew,
Light was thy heart as thy small, dancing feet,
Sun-gold and moon-white and midsummer blue,
God must have dreamed as He fashioned thee, Sweet.

God must have dreamed when He fashioned thee so,
Out of the charms of an exquisite hour,
Moulding thy spirit of sunlight and snow.
Haply He blundered and made thee a flower.

Haply He wrought thee for organ or lute,
One brave, clear note from His infinite bars,
And sang thee to me who am smitten and mute,
Once, ere He made thee, Sweet, one with the stars.

DISCONTENT.

In trivial happenings my days unroll,
And leave me empty-hearted and dismayed;
I spend the coin of life in sordid trade,
And grieve for my impoverishment of soul;
The early hours, full-rounded, sweet and whole,
Celestial servants, earnest, truth-arrayed,
That waited on mine eager youth and made
My path a highway to a certain goal,
Are dim shades in the limbus of lost days,
And sloth and fear attend me in their stead,
Twin tyrants most inseparably wed,
And all my steps fall into shadowed ways;
My life's pure gold is miserably spent
To purchase folly's futile discontent.

AT RIVERVIEW.

I could have loved thee better had I willed;
I would have loved thee better had I known
The secret ways we two must pass alone
Till God's obscure devices be fulfilled;
Thy voice I heard, once, stolid, now is stilled
Beyond the power of one slight word to own
I wronged thee, or to comfort or condone
For tardy love now stricken, mute, and chilled;
My heart hath burned with penitential grief
Dry as the flowers I set above thy head
When these bare willow trees were fresh in leaf,
And I was fresh in sorrow for thee dead;
Thou too art like my little withered sheaf,
Still and uncaring in thy narrow bed.

SONG.

Day passes, night comes,
  Stealthy as death;
Wave rises, wind drums,
  Hill vanisheth.

Year wasteth, leaves fall,
  Red leaves and gold;
Birds wander, flowers all
  Perish in mould.

Youth fadeth, joys wane,
  Warm blood grows chill;
Heart sated with pain
  Lieth now still.

IN ORONO.

The maples blow in Orono
In sweet November weather;
And sun and wind, their hands entwined,
Dance down the road together;
And laughing leaves in galaxies
Troop out across the heather.

Long time ago in Orono
One passed me by, wayfaring;
I was a youth, I lived forsooth
In peace then, little caring;
His face was hid; I dreamed and said,
"Would I his fate were sharing!"

Then did I go from Orono—
Alas for youth and dreaming!
One secret dawn ere shades were drawn,
I fled, with skillful scheming;
Far down the way at burst of day
I saw the strange cloak gleaming.

Life paces slow in Orono
And peace is for the pleading;
But O how gay the unknown way,
And sweet past any heeding!
I took the quest and never guessed
My heart would be a-bleeding.

In Orono, in Orono
A stranger passed me, singing;
He struck his lute: my lips were mute,
But all my heart was ringing.
And I did go from Orono
Straight as a skylark winging.

O long ago from Orono
I wandered one bright morrow;
A stranger sung, and I was young,
And would his beauty borrow.
How could I know in Orono
Love wore a face of sorrow?

The maples blow in Orono
Full merrily as ever;
The sun and wind, their hands entwined,
No fate shall ere dissever;
And could I go to Orono,
I'd leave it never, never!

BEETHOVEN'S PRAYER.

WHEN the long years have had their toll of me—
Firm cheek, bright eye, and smooth, unwrinkled brow,
And all the manifold joys that please me now—
And I have come to bear life languidly
As Atlas bears his sphere and would be free
To stretch his eager limbs did time allow,
I shall not, like that old musician, bow
My silvered head and pray, "O must it be?"
But I shall watch the blazing sky grow gray,
And wait impatient for the lonely hour and chill;
Then shall I drop the latch and go my way
With ready heart and calm, quiescent will;
There will be gypsy triumph in my soul
When the long years have had their ruthless toll!

ACQUIESCENCE.

I'LL love thee, yes, but lightly, lightly, so
If my light love should tire and pass too soon
Thou wilt not even know.

Wisely dost thou petition and require.
Great love knows never half the happiness
Of one calm, sweet desire.

I'll give my heart, but never past recall.
One scarce would miss that early evening star
So pale there, should it fall,

But mark how proud Selene fills the sky!
The earth would perish and the gods despair
If she should faint and die.

I'll love thee lightly, lightly, without rue.
For if we miss mad passion's poignancies,
We'll miss his anguish, too!

I'll love thee with a love so debonair,
If my strange heart its light vows should recant,
Thou wilt not even care!

ELEGIAC.

LIFE is a close-forged fetter,
Whose key the sphinxes keep;
I think it would be better
On this green hill to sleep;
I think it would be better,
If dreams were pure and deep.

I think if I might waken
To find this great, blue sky,
And the young leaves wind-shaken,
And soft clouds drifting by,
If I might some day waken,
I should not grieve to die.

If I could find the beauty
Of April's tender face,
And hear the robin's fluty,
Sweet notes of matin-grace,
I would forsake old duty,
And slumber here a space.

Life is an irksome fetter,
Its key the sphinxes hold;
I think it would be better
To lie in this green fold;
Life is a close-forged fetter
Whose hasps are precious gold.

NIGHT-SONG.

TURN back the flower-sown coverlet
And lay the pillow right;
Make sweet my still conventual room,
And quench the late-watch light;
For I shall need no lamp by day,
And there are stars by night.

And lay me where I cannot miss
The caravan of spring,
Where I may watch the leaves come back,
And hear them whispering;
For if I see life's miracle,
How can I help but sing?

Upon my couch strew rosemary
And myrrh and sweet gale spread;
Lift high the eastern blinds so I
May see the day break red;
And leave me to my long, long dreams,
And never think me dead.

CHANCE.

The little gray boats go down to the sea,
And the great gray ships with their colors high,
And the dark drifts banked on their funnels three,
Trail slowly across the mackerel sky.

In their plumes of purple and amethyst
The little gray sailers move on and on
Down rollicking oceans of milk-white mist,
While the black gulls cry in the hush of dawn.

The little gray boats they are staunch and true,
They challenge the foam-flecked, towering wave,
And they cleave the night till it give to blue.
O the little gray boats are fine and brave.

The little gray boats seek precious store;
Outrigger and shallop and brigantine
From the Virgins voyage to Singapore,
And a myriad unknown ports between.

The little gray boats sail high and free,
And the black gulls follow with skirls of pain.
Of the ships that go proudly down to sea,
There be some that come never to port again.

TO ADVERSITY.

They count it folly that I worship thee,
Thou friend of man, despised Adversity;
Because to dark-browed pain I fondly cling,
They think my heart a bruised and broken thing.
They have not seen the Plan that guideth me.

They think me foe to man for that I pause
In solitude to ponder on God's laws;
And when I kneel in some serene retreat,
Transfixed with holy grief, they cry, "Defeat!"
What know they of the mighty, secret Cause?

They think thy ways unkind, O master-friend,
They think my spirit hurt beyond amend;
Thy hand that doth upon me heavy lie
In secret benediction, they decry;
They see my sorrow, they see not its End.

They think me mourning when I only wait,
When life I most do love they think I hate,
And when in feverish haste I sometimes grope,
They think me dumb to laughter, blind to hope;
They know not that my way is high and straight.

For how could pity quicken save by tears,
Or courage grow except by strife and fears?
Or wisdom thrive on pleasure's honey-mead?
That heart alone doth swell that lone doth bleed.
They see the gray day, I look down the years.

Thy ways are hard, I grant, O thorny one!
The heart that loves thee must be first undone,
Must first its fund of earthy blessings lay
Upon thine altar to be burned away,
And naked kneel to meet the rising sun.

They pity me, O Friend, and do thee ill;
They have not heard thy counsel wise and still,
  That bids me court all misery and wrong,
  That I may suffer bravely and be strong,
And when fear says "You cannot!" cry "I will!"

They know not, Master, what the purpose be
That doth inspirit and encourage me
  To bear thy lashings yet a little while;
  Behind thy frown I see thy kindly smile.
They love not God or man who love not thee!

CONSUMMATION.

Let me no knavish fears of living own,
Nor craven wishes feel to fly life's bane:
I would have all its loss and all its gain,
Nor leave ere I its uttermost have known.
I ask no quick release when I have grown
Sated with ecstasy or sick with pain;
I would the last drop in the goblet drain
And stand at length in ruin and alone.
I beg no Providence my heart to spare
The final pang, this selfhood's slow decay;
No sudden sweet Nepenthe do I pray,
Nor surcease from life's last august despair.
Let me in sombre Stygian darkness fare
Into the lambent glories of the day.

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